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Shanker denies Soviet charges of links to CIA

Teachers union President Albert Shanker says anyone who believes a Radio Moscow report that he is a CIA contact for the Polish Solidarity trade union "can also believe in the tooth fairy."

The state-controlled Soviet radio also said the new Solidarity Information and Press Office, which opened in the United Federation of Teachers building in Manhattan last Thursday, was a front for the CIA.

"These charges are outrageous and untrue. Anybody who believes that I am a CIA agent can also believe in the tooth fairy," Shanker said in a statement released yesterday in Washington.

Shanker serves as both president of the national American Federation of Teachers and the UFT, New York local of the union.

In their own statement, the press office said it "is independent of the Polish trade union Solidarity as well as other organizations, whether they be in Poland, the United States or elsewhere.

"Our function . . . is exclusively to serve as a transmitter of information emanating from Solidarity, Poland's independent trade union movement," the office said.

Civil-rights leader Bayard Rustin, executive director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute and a member of the board of directors of the Solidarity information center, said the center pays \$290 a month to the agent that manages the UFT building to rent three small rooms.

Looking for scapegoat

Shanker said the Soviets' media campaign against Solidarity is an

indication that they are looking for a scapegoat, in this case the CIA, to launch a military attack on Poland.

"Ten million workers in Poland have decided to join a free union not controlled by the Communist Party. It is terribly embarrassing to the communist regime that the first workers revolution to take place in the world is taking place in Poland against a communist government," Shanker said.

The Radio Moscow report was a summary of an article that appears in today's edition of the newspaper Literary Gazette.

"It has become known that the CIA has taken under its wing the information bureau of Poland's Solidarity trade union, which has opened in New York," the radio claimed.

"A CIA agent, Albert Shanker, is responsible for material supplies. He uses the cover of leader of the teachers' labor federation. This organization annually receives \$100,000 from the CIA for international contacts and activities to stimulate the formation of so-called free trade unions in other countries," the broadcast said.

The radio did not offer any evidence to back up its allegations.

As to the charge Shanker is receiving CIA money, the teachers' union president responded, "We haven't received a penny."

Shanker said, however, that the AFT, which represents 580,000 teachers, receives funding from the federal Agency for International Development. Shanker said AID funds are used to help the other teachers' unions in Asia, Africa and Latin America.